

LMC Update Email
30 October 2020

Dear colleagues

GP appointments data (England)

The latest [GP appointments data](#) for England was published yesterday, which shows that there were 6.5 million more appointments in September than in August and almost a million more appointments than in September 2019. The data also shows that there were:

- 4.7 million more face-to-face appointment in September than in August
- 56% of appointments in September 2020 were face-to-face and 38% of appointments were via telephone, compared to 81% and 13%, respectively, in September 2019.
- 1.8 million more same day appointments in September than in August, with 1.5 million more same day appointments than in September 2019.
- Over 2 million more same or next day appointments in September this year compared to August 2020 and September 2019.

This data clearly shows that despite the pandemic and what has been portrayed in the media, general practice remains open and is delivering more appointments than we did at this time last year. Our [tracker survey](#) (see Q30) also shows that remote consultations actually take longer than face-to-face ones, leaving GPs more tired and with longer working days as a result - so simple appointment numbers only tells half the story of the change taking place. Read the BMA statement in response [here](#)

We sent the attached letter to NHS England/Improvement yesterday to highlight our serious concerns over the increasing pressures in general practice as evidenced both in the GP appointment data and our latest tracker survey, and the immediate need for NHSE/I support.

I was quoted in the Daily Mirror (printed version) today about the increase in remote consultations in primary care, where I said: "Physical appointments will always be a vital part of general practice".

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, has [recorded a video message](#), thanking all NHS staff for their work during COVID-19 and going into the winter. Nikki Kanani, Medical Director of Primary Care for NHSE/I has also sent a [message of thanks to Primary Care](#).

Tracker survey results

The BMA's [latest tracker survey](#) was published this week which shows that more than 74% of GPs responding are quite or extremely anxious about work in the coming months and 47% say their levels of stress, anxiety and emotional distress had got worse since the pandemic began.

64% of GPs reported higher than normal level of fatigue or exhaustion from working during the pandemic and 62% reported that they or a clinical colleague in their practice had been forced to self-isolate within the past two weeks - with 39% of all respondents reporting a 'moderate' or significant' impact on patient care. View the [GP specific results](#)



The survey also demonstrated that worries about workload pressures are more from non-covid related issues - underlining why we need more support from NHSE/I to support practices maintain some degree of services at a time when hospitals can and are stopping doing routine elective work.

These figures clearly highlight the increasing pressure on general practice during the second wave of the pandemic. Staff are working harder, they are very tired and concerned that they are going to have difficulty satisfying demand in the next few months and the overwhelming reason for moving to remote consultations is to keep staff and patients safe. Read the [BMA statement here](#)

The survey was reported on by [Mail online](#), [Sunday Mirror](#), [PA](#), [Independent](#), [iNews](#), [Metro](#), [Huff Post UK](#), [Sunday Express](#), [Evening Standard](#), [Manchester Evening News](#) and a number of other regional publications including the Yorkshire Post and Nottingham Post. [GPonline](#) reported on the [GP specific results](#).

COVID-19 vaccination

Recent media reports have highlighted the possibility of a COVID-19 vaccination being available by December. Government have been planning for this but it depends on a number of fundamental issues such as the effectiveness of the early vaccines once trials have completed, the quantity that can be produced, supply logistics and the licencing arrangements.

As we have previously informed you, JCVI have published their [interim recommendations](#) outlining the priority for vaccination.

We are now in negotiations with NHSEI to agree the role that general practice will play in the vaccination programme. We have successfully made the case to government that practices are experts in mass vaccination, as is clearly demonstrated by the current massive flu campaign, and patients, particularly those who normally receive a flu vaccination, would expect to receive their COVID-19 vaccination from their local practice team.

The nature of the first vaccinations that are likely to be available will require different arrangements to the flu campaign but we believe that practices, probably working together within their area, will be best placed to deliver this vitally important programme. We hope to be able to share more details in the next few days.

General practice workforce initiatives

We have published a guide to inform GPs, PCNs and LMCs about the range of [workforce initiatives and schemes](#) in England. The guide includes helpful information about what is on offer in each of the scheme and how to apply for them.

We have also published a new guide to applying for the [GP partnership scheme](#), which will help you navigate what can be a complicated application process. The scheme was launched on 1 July and supports clinicians who are interested in becoming a practice partner. You can read more in this [blog](#) by Krishna Kasaraneni, member of GPC England's Executive team and workforce lead.

Specialty training applications

Applications for Round 1 of 2021 GP specialty training will be open from 2 November to 1 December 2020. Please 'like' and follow the #Choose GP [Facebook page](#) to keep up to date with news and views, and forward this information to any doctors who may be thinking about career options.

The [GP National Recruitment Office](#) (GPNRO) website is the place to go for more information or there are a number of GPs and trainees who are able to help with local or general enquiries. Email Daryl at gprecruitment@hee.nhs.uk to be put in touch.

Parental leave guidance

We have published [A guide for GPs – maternity leave and other types of parental leave](#) which contains key information and useful links on the full range of parental leave topics. It will serve as a checklist for each stage of your leave. You can read more in this [blog](#) by Sarah Westerbeek.

We will also be hosting a webinar and workshop for more in depth guidance to explain these issues:

2 December (12.30 – 2.00pm) – *Webinar - 'GP Maternity and Parental leave Guide: launch and introduction to the guide'*. The session will also touch on local maternity workshops and there will be a Q&A session. Register [here](#)

9 December (12.30 – 2.30pm) – *Workshop - 'GP maternity'*. An in depth run through everything you need to consider before, during and after maternity leave, including advice on leave and pay entitlements, notifying your practice, appraisals, CPD and returning to work. Register [here](#)

No change to CQC fees

The CQC fees scheme will not change in 2021/22. This means that, for most providers, their fees will remain the same as in 2019/20 and 2020/21, providing their registration or size does not change. The fees for General Practice remain fully reimbursable. Since the fees scheme will remain the same in 2021/22 as in the last two years, you can find the fees scheme, guidance and calculator at www.cqc.org.uk/fees

Scottish GPC update for LMCs (Scotland)

Please find attached BMA Scottish GP Committee's Scottish LMC Update October 2020. This follows the meeting of SGPC held last week.

LMC UK conference 2021

The dates for the LMC UK Conference 2021 have now been set for 12-13 May. It is hoped that this will be a full conference at the Barbican in York. However, the situation is still very uncertain at this time and will be kept under constant review by the Chairman and Conference Team. If the Covid situation does not improve, then this will be changed to a virtual event. The final decision on this will be made within the next few months.

Mental health and wellbeing

The BMA continues to offer [wellbeing services](#) and confidential 24/7 counselling and peer support for all doctors and medical students, as well as their partners and dependents, on 0330 123 1245. Access the [BMA's COVID-19 wellbeing pages here](#).

The BMA has welcomed the NHSE/I [announcement](#) of further funding for the expanded and rapid access provision of mental health services for NHS staff in England over the winter. This is urgently required and something the BMA has been calling for to support the major challenges NHS staff are facing. At the ARM, a motion was passed expressing concern at the potential long-term impact of the pandemic and called for resources to support the profession. As we head into a second wave of the virus it is vital that staff are protected. [Find out more here](#)

BMA COVID-19 guidance

Read our **[COVID-19 toolkit for GPs and practices](#)**, to help answer questions on a large range of topics relating to COVID-19. There is also guidance on the following topics:

- [Model terms of engagement for a GP providing temporary COVID-19 services](#)
- [Terms and conditions for sessional GPs](#)
- [Risk assessments](#)

COVID-19 media

Brian McGregor, GPC member and chair of the BMA Yorkshire regional council, appeared on [Good Morning Britain](#) (around 6.25am) to discuss the latest restrictions facing the north. He told the programme that introducing tougher restrictions must be met with a national prevention plan to ensure we can really start to curb the virus, including an effective test and trace system. He was also interviewed on BBC Look North.

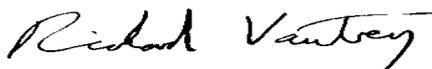
Dr McGregor also wrote a piece in the Yorkshire Post on Wednesday, highlighting the 'grim prognosis' for the NHS if doctors continued to be underappreciated. He also wrote that while the NHS has been overwhelmed by public thanks, "the rainbows and rounds of applause are not enough to make many of our most senior doctors feel that they are truly appreciated by the people who hold the power and the purse strings in our country".

Rob Barnett, GPC member and deputy chair of the BMA north west regional council, spoke to [BBC Merseyside](#) (around 7am) about how the NHS will cope this winter given Covid-19 and the natural increase in pressures over the colder months. He talked about the pressures in general practice, saying that the difficulties are not helped by issues like workforce shortages.

See this week's GP bulletin [here](#).

Have a good weekend

Richard



Richard Vautrey
Chair, BMA GPs committee